



CITY OF BLOOMINGTON COMMON COUNCIL

AGENDA AND NOTICE:
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON COUNCIL PROCESSES
TUESDAY | 6:00 PM
30 January 2024

*McCloskey Conference Room (#135), Showers Building, 401 N. Morton Street
The public may also access the meeting at the following link:*

<https://bloomington.zoom.us/j/89916793735?pwd=1OKzRv5F7Gcmso8vPhAzj9b7LcaozC.1>

Chair: Isabel Piedmont-Smith

- I. Agenda summation
- II. Summary of 2023 Recommendations regarding city boards and commissions
 - A. Creation of a coordinator position within the Office of the City Clerk
 - B. Onboarding, training, and ongoing support of staff liaisons and board/commission members (including commissioner “code of conduct”)
 - C. Improved transparency and communication in the appointment process and in the work of the boards/commissions
 - D. Annual reports from boards and commissions
 - E. Review of purpose/mission of each discretionary board and commission in BMC
 - F. Further assessment, with mayor’s administration, of proposed commission elimination and mergers

SHOULD ANY OF **B-F** BE DONE BEFORE **A** IS IMPLEMENTED?
- III. Discussion of committee goals, priorities, and timelines for 2024
 - A. Review of other topics raised in 2023 for this committee to work on (may require revisions to BMC Chapter 2)
 1. Council meeting procedures and format
 2. Accessibility of Council meetings
 3. Non-legislative agenda items for Council consideration
 4. Improving overall public engagement
 5. Formal integration of equity into the legislative process
 6. Removal “for cause” of board and commission members appointed by Council
 - B. Brainstorming of topics not yet raised
 - C. Prioritization
 - D. Preliminary timeline

Posted: 26 January 2024

- IV.** Public comment (if any): Minimum 10 minutes allocated
- V.** Scheduling next meeting(s)
- VI.** Other business
- VII.** Adjournment



**City of Bloomington
Office of the Common Council**

Memorandum

To: Committee on Council Processes
From: Stephen Lucas, Council Administrator/Attorney
Date: 29 January 2024
Re: 2023 committee report on board/commission reform; feedback on purview, purposes, duties, and powers from boards/commissions

The Committee on Council Processes met several times in 2023. The Committee produced a report, which was presented to and accepted by the Common Council on December 13, 2023. The Committee's [Report on Board and Commission Reform](#) is available on the [Committee's webpage](#).

On September 21, 2023, at the direction of the Committee, the Council Office sent a request to 16 boards and commissions within the city asking for feedback from those boards/commissions on whether the purposes, duties, goals, etc. currently in local code accurately reflect and capture the activities of each board/commission. Boards/commissions were invited to share any suggested revisions to their respective local code provisions.

Five commissions responded with feedback, and those responses are included herein. Some commissions had meeting cancellations during the end of 2023 and may yet provide additional feedback beyond what's included here.

COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AND LATINO AFFAIRS

Current

BMC 2.23.080(5)

Purpose and Duties. The commission shall do the following:

- (a) Develop action committees addressing the challenges of members of the Hispanic and Latino population in the areas of education, health, employment and public safety; and
- (b) Serve as a catalyst to promote positive public and private remedies to the multi-faceted issues confronting Latinos and Hispanics in our community and the resulting effects on the entire community; and
- (c) Network with like-minded groups such as the Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino affairs, Su Casa Columbus, Indiana University Latino Cultural Center (La Casa) and local organizations to share ideas and information and to collaborate on projects where appropriate; and
- (d) Celebrate Latino and Hispanic history and contributions to the Bloomington community and in the United States.

Response/Suggestions from Commission

BMC 2.23.080(5)

Purpose and Duties. The commission shall do the following:

- (a) Develop action committees addressing the challenges of members of the Hispanic and Latino population in the areas of education, health, employment and public safety; and

Feedback: The Commission is changing its membership due to 3 members having resigned, after having appointed the new members new action committees will be established in the areas of education, health, employment, and public safety.

- (b) Serve as a catalyst to promote positive public and private remedies to the multi-faceted issues confronting Latinos and Hispanics in our community and the resulting effects on the entire community; and

Feedback: The Commission has served as a liaison to promote more and better opportunities for Latinos and Hispanics with other Community partners. A partnership started with Boston Scientific Corporation, which represents one of the largest employers for Hispanic and Latino families living in Bloomington.

- (c) Network with like-minded groups such as the Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino affairs, Su Casa Columbus, Indiana University Latino Cultural Center (La Casa) and local organizations to share ideas and information and to collaborate on projects where appropriate; and

Feedback: The Commission has worked closely with some of these groups and served as a liaison to promote more and better opportunities for Latinos and Hispanics, by sharing information and providing advice to Latino students at

Indiana University Latino Cultural Center (La Casa), by collaborating on informational and assistance programs with El Centro Comunal Latino, by assisting HoosierHills Food Bank every 3rd Monday of the month in the Heatherwood food pantry for Latino and Hispanic families, by meeting with St Paul's Catholic Center Latino and Hispanic community.

(d) Celebrate Latino and Hispanic history and contributions to the Bloomington community and in the United States.

Feedback: The Commission has celebrated Latino and Hispanic history and contributions to the Bloomington community and the United States by hosting a table in La Fiesta del Otoño and by introducing a Parks and Recreation event that recognizes the Latino culture within the National Hispanic Heritage Month, by participating in the Black y Brown Arts Festival, by writing informative and cultural articles in Boletin Comunitario, by interviewing inspiring and successful Hispanic and Latino community members in the Spanish WFHB Community radio show Hola Bloomington.

Does this accurately reflect and capture the activities of the Commission? Would the Commission suggest any revisions to this language and, if so, what are those revisions?

Feedback: Yes, this reflects the main activities and purpose of the Commission on Hispanic and Latino Affairs. No need to change the language, except to remove "the Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs and Su Casa Columbus Network" from the list mentioned in BMC 2.23.080(5)(c).

COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABILITY

Current

BMC 2.12.100(1)

Public Policy and Purpose. A sustainable community seeks to enhance the socio-environmental-economic well-being of the community while taking precautions not to compromise the quality of life of future generations. Toward that end, it reduces its use of nonrenewable natural resources and its production of wastes, while at the same time improving livability. The mission of the Bloomington Commission on Sustainability is to promote sustainable socio-environmental-economic well-being of Bloomington and all its inhabitants.

Response/Suggestions from Commission

I [Emma Ferguson (Chair, BCOS)] am emailing you on behalf of the Bloomington Commission on Sustainability. We appreciate your reception of our feedback on our goals, purpose and current code. At our November [2023] regular meeting, our Commission members collaborated on current goals and changes that could be made to the current city code.

We, as a Commission, agree that the efforts and activities of the Commission on Sustainability and Environmental Commission, should remain separate and independent from each other. We acknowledge that there are a couple overlapping areas of concern, however, we believe the Commission on Sustainability's purpose and duties have a broader reaching list of areas to address within our community.

Additionally, these are the revisions we would recommend to the current city code:

- Incorporating the United Nation's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which BCOS adopted in 2022
- Adding a more specific definition of sustainability; one that would acknowledge the broadened specifics included in the SDGs, i.e.:
 - Responsible consumption and production
 - Affordable and clean energy
 - Quality education
- Remove terms such as "socio-environmental-economic", which creates more confusion than clarity
- Recognizing the more concerted efforts of our Commissioners, including outreach, research, education and hands-on projects

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION (Environmental Quality and Conservation Commission)

Current

BMC 2.12.050(1)

Purpose. It is declared to be the public policy of the City of Bloomington and the purpose of this section to achieve and maintain such levels of environmental quality as will protect human health and safety, and to the greatest degree practicable, prevent injury to plant and animal life and property, foster the comfort and conveniences of the people, promote the economic and social development of Bloomington and facilitate the enjoyment of the natural attractions of the City of Bloomington.

BMC 2.12.050(6)

Powers and Duties. The Commission shall have the following powers and duties:

- (a) To adopt administrative rules and regulations for the conduct of its business.
- (b) To hold hearings relating to any aspect of or matter in the administration of this section and in cases of non-compliance request the city legal department to take legal action.
- (c) To retain, employ, provide for, and compensate, within appropriations available thereof, such consultants, assistants, deputies, clerks, technical and other employees, on a full or part-time basis as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this section and prescribe the times at which they shall be appointed, the duration of their appointments and their powers and duties.
- (d) To secure necessary scientific, technical, administrative and operational services including laboratory facilities, by contract or otherwise with any educational institution, experiment station, or any board, department, or other agency of any subdivision of state or the federal government.
- (e) To determine by means of field studies and sampling the degree of pollution in Bloomington.
- (f) To encourage and conduct studies, investigations, and research relating to pollution and its causes, effects, prevention, abatement and control in Bloomington, and make recommendations to the appropriate public and private bodies with respect thereto.
- (g) To classify contaminant sources, which in the commission's judgment may cause or contribute to pollution.
- (h) To prepare and develop a comprehensive plan or plans for the prevention, abatement and control of pollution in Bloomington.
- (i) To encourage voluntary cooperation by persons and affected groups to achieve the purposes of this section.
- (j) To collect and disseminate information and conduct educational and training programs relating to pollution and environmental quality and conservation.
- (k) To advise, consult, contract and cooperate with other agencies of the State and the City of Bloomington, other local governments, industries, other states, interstate or interlocal agencies, and the federal government, and with interested persons or groups.
- (l) To apply for, accept, receive and administer grants or other funds or gifts from public or private agencies including the state and federal governments for the purpose of carrying out any of the provisions or purposes of this section. Such funds received by the

commission pursuant to this subdivision shall be deposited in accordance with the administrative regulations of the commission. The commission is authorized to promulgate such rules and regulations or enter into contracts as it may deem necessary for carrying out the provisions of this subdivision.

(m) To make appropriate inquiry into and give constructive consideration to the operations and policies of all departments and governmental branches of the City of Bloomington concerning their adherence to a commitment for environmental quality and the conservation of natural resources.

(n) To prepare reports and recommendations to the mayor, common council, board of public works, and the planning commission as needed.

Response/Suggestions from Commission

The members of the Environmental Commission (EC) read and understand the suggestions of the Novak Report. At our November 2023 meeting we held a vote, and we were unanimously opposed to merging with the Commission on Sustainability.

We appreciate the idea of performing periodic reviews of each commission's scopes, and we would like to suggest updates to the 'Purpose' and 'Powers and Duties' sections of the municipal code following further discussions with the EC and staff liaison.

We are looking forward to future conversations with the Common Council's Special Committee on Council Processes on this subject.

Many thanks,
Carrie Albright, Chair, Bloomington Environmental Commission

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY COMMISSION

Current

BMC 2.12.080(1)

Purpose. The purpose of this commission is to promote and encourage bicycling, walking and running in a safe and efficient manner in the City of Bloomington for the purpose of health, recreation and transportation.

BMC 2.12.080(6)

Duties. The duties of this commission shall be as follows:

- (A) To serve as a citizens forum for discussion and recommendation of improvement to existing facilities and planning of new projects concerning safe access for cyclists, pedestrians and runners;
- (B) To prepare reports and recommendations to the mayor, common council, plan commission and planning and transportation department as needed, concerning the needs of cyclists, pedestrians and runners within the city;
- (C) To foster and develop safety programs for cyclists, pedestrians and runners; and,
- (D) To encourage the hosting of cycling, walking and running events conducted in a safe manner which will attract visitors from outside of the City.

Response/Suggestions from Commission

- Mitch Rice: Here are my quick edits/comments. My memory may be a bit faulty, so staff should correct me if needed.

Purpose: I would re-order the priorities, safe, low-carbon transportation should be our first concern, with the added benefits of better health and the fun of urban biking and hiking.

BMC 2.12.080(1)

Purpose. The purpose of this commission is to promote and encourage walking, bicycling and running in a safe and efficient manner in the City of Bloomington for the purposes of transportation, health, and recreation.

This is a bit more complex, I did not set out to be this verbose, but...

BMC 2.12.080(6)

Duties. The duties of this commission shall be as follows:

- (A) To serve as a citizens forum for discussion and recommendation of improvement to existing facilities and planning of new projects concerning safe access for cyclists, pedestrians and runners;

- (B) To prepare reports and recommendations to the mayor, common council, plan commission and planning and transportation department as needed, concerning the needs of cyclists, pedestrians and runners within the city;

I don't remember writing any reports or recommendations as a group, unless staff led, or of immediate import. But I think it would be great if we could brainstorm and create multiple scenarios for our future. It seems we have been in reactive mode, not pro-active. We vote on stuff already in the pipeline. When suggestions or recommendations for large or small projects are brought out in a meeting, we are told to submit a u-report as an individual. Is it possible for the Commission to submit a report so that it would get some more attention? Is this what is meant by reports and recommendations? Is there a template or form that we can use, or should everything come through staff? Do we have a common repository of documents we have submitted so that we could review and look to the future by understanding the past?

- (C) To foster and develop safety programs for cyclists, pedestrians and runners; and,

This has been staff led in most cases. If we had a budget, or input into the budget to do any of this, I would be happy to work on it. We gave away some lights a couple of times, and offered suggestion for the original bike maps.

- (D) To encourage the hosting of cycling, walking and running events conducted in a safe manner which will attract visitors from outside of the City.

I don't see why the commission is responsible for tourism attraction, and in my memory, this has not happened. The Criterion, the Hilly Hundred, all that stuff has not come by our commission AFAIK.

I think we should focus on the safety and convenience of pedestrians, bicyclists, skaters, scooterists, one-wheelers, all those whose transportation choices help reduce the carbon load we are releasing daily. We don't need events, classes, seminars, videos, whatever, as much as we need safe infrastructure. We don't need to convince people to use alternative transportation modes, we just need to make it safe and enjoyable to do so. We need fair transportation budgeting. More people walk than drive, but each year for the past 40 I have been here there is a political fight as to who gets the minor piece of the transportation budget for sidewalks. This is changing, I know, but it does illustrate how little we approach transportation budgeting, cars always get the lion's share.

Could someone give me in round numbers how much is spent on road improvements vs. sidewalk and bike infrastructure? I may be wrong in my assumptions from what I see, and certainly more has been spent on alt transportation recently, now that we are implementing Greenways, but how much? Percentages would be fine, but it would be good to know in dollars as well, citizens seem particularly interested in this.

As to the merge, I am ok with it as bike-ped stuff would then be seen as transportation, not just recreation. What would be the balance in seating? I seem to remember 2 seats? How many members in total?

In the past, the community has seen biking as the realm of racers and long haul athletes with fancy clothes (Little 500, Hoosier Hills, etc) We need to recognize that biking (and walking/bussing) are the most efficient modes of urban travel, that the continued use of single occupancy gas powered vehicles is hazardous to our society and our world. To quote Greta: THE HOUSE IS ON FIRE!

- Ann Edmonds: Thanks, Mitch, for sharing your response. I am ok with Mitch's suggestion that there needs to be greater emphasis on reducing our carbon footprint. I would also expand the purpose to include safe travel for all forms of micro-mobility transportation.
- Mitch Rice: Duties: The only report that I can remember is the one that Mark Stosberg did with some feedback from BPSC that led to changing the criteria for allocating sidewalk funds and made funding for sidewalks more equitable and less political pork.

We did tweak and refine the criteria for choosing resident led traffic calming over several years. We have never addressed the criteria for setting priorities for staff-led projects. I remember Beth reading us the list of projects that appear in the 2019 TP, but I was new to BPSC at the time and didn't question what I was seeing. I do know that some projects are designated as Phase 2 while others are Phase 1, but some Phase 2 projects (e.g. the 17th St MUP) have been done while some Phase 1 projects have not. There may be good reasons for the change in priority (e.g. significant development in the area), but BPSC has never involved in reordering priorities.

Again, the language needs to be expanded to include all micro-mobility users of transportation, not just cyclists.

- Mitch Rice: Ann, Well said, I like your wording better than mine!
- Paul Ash: There was a reason why the BPSC was formed years ago. That is still valid.
- Kori Renn: I don't have the history but transportation leans heavy toward cars busses etc. the voice of walkers bikers and micro transportation needs its own voice. For all the reasons Mitch and Ann and others have shared. It's very easy for a consultant to say this is all serving "transportation" but without an independent voice of non carbon/low carbon modes, cars get the votes.
- Pauly Tarricone: I would certainly echo everyone's sentiments so far. The need for low/no carbon transportation is highly urgent, and I feel it would be de-prioritized if lumped in with a "Transportation Commission." The goals of sustainability seem to

be central to the operations of the BPSC, and I think that should be reflected in the language of its mission.

Additionally, and I'm not sure the extent to which this informs the approach of other commissioners, but the cost-saving for both individual and city is significant for pedestrian and bike infrastructure when compared to auto infrastructure. The overall maintenance costs for bike/ped infrastructure are a fraction of that for cars, even when considering each on a per capita basis rather than raw dollars. Dynamic, safe, and comprehensive bike/pedestrian networks are critical to the long-term financial resilience of the city.

If this isn't seen to be a predominant function of the BPSC as a whole, I'm okay with it not being included.

PARKING COMMISSION

Current

BMC 2.12.110(a)

Purpose. It shall be the primary purpose of the parking commission (commission), in coordination with decision-makers and other entities as is necessary or prudent:

- (1) To develop, implement, maintain, and promote a comprehensive policy on parking that takes into account the entirety of, and furthers the objectives of, the city's comprehensive plan; and
- (2) To coordinate parking activities, to carry on educational activities in parking matters, to supervise the preparation and publication of parking reports, to receive comments and concerns having to do with parking matters, and to recommend to the common council and to appropriate city officials ways and means for achieving the city's comprehensive plan objectives through the administration of parking policies and the enforcement of parking regulations.

BMC 2.12.110(e)

Powers and Duties. The commission shall meet at least one time each month, unless it votes to cancel the meeting. Its powers and duties shall include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Accessing all data regarding the city's parking inventory, including usage, capital and operating costs, so long as the data is released in a manner consistent with exemptions from disclosure of public records set forth in Indiana Code § 5-14-3-4;
- (2) Reviewing the performance of all meters, lots, garages, and neighborhood zones in the city's parking inventory, and reviewing the performance of all divisions of city departments devoted specifically to parking management;
- (3) Making recommendations on parking policy, including but not limited to: pricing, hours of operation, addition or removal of parking spaces, and changes when necessary to city code, enforcement procedures, or any other aspect of parking management policy;
- (4) Submitting an annual report of its activities and programs to the mayor and council by October of each year;
- (5) Adopting rules and regulations for the conduct of its business; and
- (6) Applying for appropriations through the mayor, or researching and applying for grants, gifts, or other funds from public or private agencies, for the purpose of carrying out any of the provisions of this section.

Response/Suggestions from Commission

Dear Special Committee on Council Processes,

The Parking Commission appreciates the opportunity to respond to your inquiry regarding our purpose, duties, and potential revisions to our activities. During our recent meeting, we engaged in a valuable discussion about critical aspects of our roles and responsibilities as outlined in the local code. We would like to highlight two specific points that emerged during our deliberations.

Funding and Grants:

A key topic of discussion centered on number 6 of the Parking Commission's Powers and Duties. The Parking Commission has not engaged in the pursuit of national or local funding opportunities. Several members have expressed the view that this specific responsibility may no longer be essential for the Parking Commission and should be subject to a review to assess its alignment with the City's goals for the Commission.

Annual Report Submission:

Another important matter highlighted is our requirement to submit an annual report. While the Parking Commission has made significant progress in successfully authoring the annual parking report since its inception, we have faced challenges in meeting the deadlines. The Commission is currently working on streamlining the report to make it more concise and ensure timelier submissions. We consider producing these reports in a timelier manner one of the Commission's most vital duties and are committed to achieving this in the future. Additionally, there was a broader discussion about the idea of establishing universal standards for all commissions. With the aim to ensure alignment and consistency in the functions of various commissions, including ours.